



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the full report, visit www.nlc.org/afterschoolmis.



A photograph of four diverse children (two boys, two girls) standing outside a yellow school bus. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. A girl in the foreground has a blue flower hair clip and a pink backpack. A green line graph with blue vertical bars overlays the bottom half of the image, suggesting growth or data analysis.

BUILDING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO COORDINATE CITYWIDE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

A TOOLKIT FOR CITIES

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES INSTITUTE FOR YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND FAMILIES

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns it represents.

The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), a special entity within NLC, helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in January 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and other community leaders have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools, including:

- Action kits and other publications that offer a menu of practical steps that officials can take to address key problems or challenges.
- Technical assistance projects in selected communities.
- Peer networks and learning communities focused on specific program areas.
- The National Summit on Your City's Families and other workshops, leadership academies, training sessions, and cross-site meetings.
- Targeted research and periodic surveys of local officials.
- The YEF Institute's monthly webinar series.

To learn more about these tools and other aspects of the YEF Institute's work, go to www.nlc.org/iyef.

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Chris Kingsley, Senior Associate for Data Initiatives at the National League of Cities (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute), served as the lead author of this toolkit. Kim Eisenreich, Senior Associate for Afterschool, provided editorial guidance and YEF Institute Executive Director Clifford M. Johnson, Deputy Director Julie Bosland, and Audrey M. Hutchinson, Program Director for Education and Afterschool Initiatives, provided overall editorial direction. Michael Karpman and Imani Hope offered additional helpful comments and edits. Gamble Graphics was responsible for the toolkit's design and layout. Preparation of this toolkit was made possible by the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Wallace Foundation.

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Out-of-school time is critical time for our young people, for their safety and their academic and employment success. We need reliable and integrated data to strengthen an already effective partnership at the local level and make sure more children have better afterschool resources and support."

~ Mayor Greg Fischer, Louisville, Ky.

City-led efforts to build coordinated systems of afterschool programming are an important strategy for improving the health, safety and academic preparedness of children and youth. Over the past decade, municipal leaders, foundations, major nonprofit intermediaries, and school and community-based providers have increasingly come together to expand the number of high-quality programs available, increase youth participation, and improve outcomes for young people. Yet even cities with strong leadership and effective coordinating entities are often challenged by the lack of reliable information to answer basic questions about the scope and impact of afterschool programs in their communities.

To improve access to critical information – for city leaders, funders, program directors and front-line staff – cities need both the technology to track and correlate information on youth participation across dozens of organizations, and networks of skilled professionals to share, analyze, and act on that information. In most cities, these systems do not yet exist or are only partially complete.

The decision to build or enhance a management information system (MIS) raises its own set of tough questions about what information to collect and how to use it; how to negotiate data sharing agreements without violating privacy laws; how to think about the difference between evaluating youth outcomes and measuring program quality; and whether to build or buy the technology backbone that will support the data needs of policymakers, service providers, program managers, and researchers.

The National League of Cities (NLC), through its Institute for Youth, Education and Families, produced this report to help city leaders, senior municipal staff and their local partners answer those questions as they work to strengthen and coordinate services for youth and families, particularly for those cities building comprehensive afterschool systems.

The full report, available online at www.nlc.org/afterschoolmis, describes a number of the most promising approaches to building afterschool management information systems. It is a compendium of “what works,” containing numerous examples of efforts led by different city

departments, nonprofit intermediaries, schools and foundations. It features a detailed “how to” guide to help cities prepare for and implement an afterschool MIS, including strategies for addressing privacy and security concerns in collaboration with schools and families. It also includes a comprehensive review of six leading commercial MIS vendors and a cost calculator to help communities explore the expense of differently configured systems. In addition, city leaders and staff who access the full report online will find a growing library of resources to speed their progress, including sample requests for proposals, data sharing agreements, system architectures, and other useful tools to borrow and adapt.

WHY BUILD AN AFTERSCHOOL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM?

An abundance of research has demonstrated the value of high-quality afterschool programs and substantiated their positive influence on the health, safety, school attendance, and academic performance of youth. Yet it is an immense management challenge for cities and other stakeholders to know if they are fully meeting the needs of youth and maximizing the potential impact of high-quality afterschool programming.

At its best, a strong, multi-faceted afterschool MI system can improve youth outcomes by:

- Providing policymakers and funders with accurate information on the utilization, quality and impact of afterschool programs to make better decisions and targeted investments at the systems level;
- Offering regular feedback to program managers and staff about the effectiveness of their efforts, both in absolute terms and relative to other programs, to promote continuous improvement;
- Reducing the time and money that programs spend completing paperwork to meet reporting requirements, freeing up valuable resources for direct programming with youth; and
- Empowering program sites and instructors with (near) real-time information on student outcomes such as attendance, behavior and academic performance that allows sites to tailor their instruction more closely to the needs of the youth they serve.

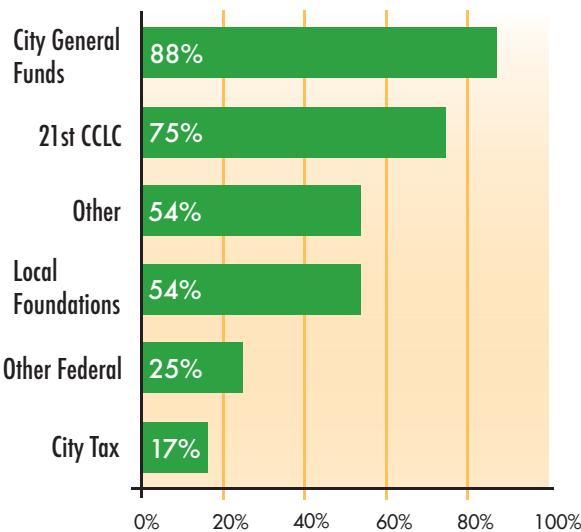
Yet as the RAND Corporation described in its authoritative review of The Wallace Foundation’s first round of investment in citywide afterschool systems, this level of coordination and intentional use of integrated data is rare:

Within cities, out-of-school time (OST) provision can be fragmented and uncoordinated. Providers rely on an unsteady and often insufficient patchwork of city, state, federal and private funding and user fees. Further, in many cities, public funding is funneled through a variety of youth-serving agencies without interagency coordination.

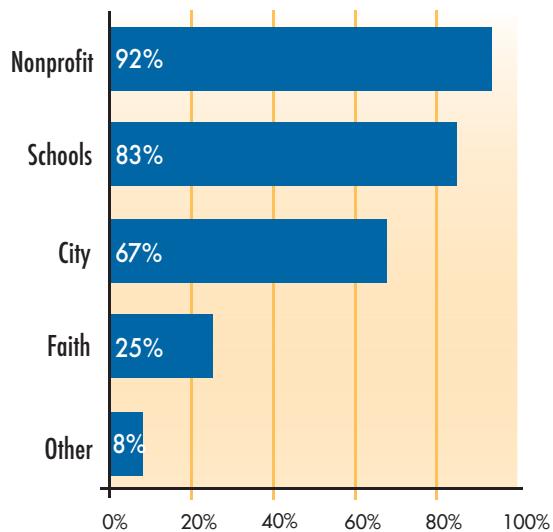
- RAND, *The Power of Data to Improve After-School Programs Citywide*

The experience of the two dozen city leaders surveyed and interviewed by NLC for this report confirmed the RAND report’s observation. Collectively, these cities had patched

**CHART 1 – WHAT FUNDS CITY OST COORDINATING ENTITIES
[N=24]**



**CHART 2 – SIGNIFICANT OST PROVIDERS
[N=24]**



Source: 2011-2012 survey of city leaders by NLC

together funding from general revenue, federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, local and national foundations, state awards, city tax levies, and the United Way to support and expand the availability of OST programs for students. Each of these sources of support has its own application requirements, funding cycles, reporting demands, and eligibility standards (Chart 1).

This funding supports programs at dozens of nonprofit and community-based programs, schools, city recreation departments and libraries, faith-based providers and others. Each of these providers has its own mission and approach to quality, and each negotiates a separate set of reporting and compliance demands with its funders (Chart 2).

City leaders strive to coordinate the millions of dollars being spent within their cities on OST programs to ensure they are consistently of high quality and reasonably well aligned with other initiatives underway. In many cities, major progress has been made toward measuring and improving the return on these investments.

However, many challenges remain. City leaders continue to struggle in assessing the reach and impact of their afterschool systems. How many youth have access to afterschool programs? How many of those with at least nominal access actually attend? Which of these programs are of high quality and have the impact that funders, providers and parents would hope for and expect? These are fundamental questions that, without an afterschool MIS, city leaders find it difficult or impossible to answer.

Only 27 percent of the cities that responded to a 2011 NLC survey believe they have a reasonably accurate count of how many youth are eligible to attend OST programs. **It is not surprising, then, that city leaders identify “reliable information” about afterschool programming and impact as the area in which they desire the most technical assistance.**

What does “reliable information” on afterschool programs encompass for a city leader? It begins with an inventory of programs available in his or her community, information on the enrollment and participation of youth in afterschool activities, data by which to assess whether programs are improving outcomes for youth, and responses from providers and parents on the many ancillary needs of youth in the system for tutoring, transportation, and social support. To be useful, this information must be accurate, timely, and reasonably comprehensive. Unfortunately, what city leaders more commonly receive is a mix of electronic and paper files of varying degrees of completeness and accuracy, covering a limited set of city-funded providers.

According to NLC’s 2011 survey:

- Only 58 percent of cities used a management information system.
- Those who did not use an MIS were unsatisfied with their process for tracking information, and believed it was inadequate to support their OST systems-building work.
- Only 38 percent of cities share information with their schools either “regularly” or “frequently”; another 38 percent never receive information from their schools.

However, city leaders are quickly overhauling these outmoded arrangements, moving away from cumbersome paper records to capturing attendance online, establishing benchmarks against which to measure the results of their investment in OST, and building relationships with schools to share information on youth outcomes – in some cases, in real time.



We've come to the realization that the better coordinated the data collection effort is, the better we can serve Bridgeport's children. They desperately need additional resources to address academic deficiencies. We need to step up efforts to obtain this data and use it to make informed decisions about the types of programs and services our children will receive."

~ Tammy Papa, Lighthouse Program Director, City of Bridgeport, Conn.

WHAT IS A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM?

Management Information Network + Management Information Technology = MIS

An afterschool management information system is made up of a network of professionals who purposefully create, analyze and use information to improve youth development programs, and a set of technologies that facilitate the work of these professionals. The most important decisions in building an MI system are not which technology to use. It is more important to decide which people to include and how to connect them to this flow of information.

Most fundamentally, MI systems allow afterschool providers to record program activities, such as youth enrollment, attendance and participation, and to summarize these activities through fixed, regularly scheduled reports to agencies and funders.

MI systems are often designed to do much more than this:

- Providers may use them to assess youth developmental assets, track the demographic characteristics of their participants, and support case management and referral.
- Policymakers may use MI systems to link afterschool participation with other administrative records to flag students who appear to be "at risk," estimate whether programs are improving college and career readiness, and evaluate the overall impact of a city's investment in out-of-school time programming.

When analyzed in support of organizational efforts to improve compliance, professional development, and process improvement, the purpose of MI systems is to create knowledge that enables providers to run more effective programs and helps administrators allocate resources to achieve their policy objectives most efficiently.

Most afterschool MI Systems are web-based. They may be custom-built by local school districts or city departments or purchased as a service from commercial vendors, including:

Cayen	Efforts-to-Outcomes (Social Solutions)
CiviCore	EZReports (ThomasKelly Software)
COMET (SophiTEC)	KidTrax (nFocus)
CommunityTech Knowledge	YouthServices.net (Cityspan)

For more information on each of these vendors, see Section 4 of the full report online at www.nlc.org/afterschoolmis.

FOUR HIGH VALUE USES OF AFTERSCHOOL DATA

Management information systems are at the center of citywide efforts to collect, store, link, analyze, report, learn from, and use information on the afterschool programs that cities and their local partners operate. This section describes four important uses of data on local afterschool programs that motivate cities to invest in the complex but highly beneficial work of building or enhancing an MIS:

Assess Youth Outcomes and System Impact

Among the most important uses of an MI system is to provide a city's coordinating entity with the kind of information on system usage and youth outcomes that can inform decisions about efforts to expand access, improve program quality, and link afterschool initiatives to broader citywide goals such as college and career readiness and public safety. Measuring impact begins with answering basic questions about the scope of afterschool services available in the community, counting the number of participants in different programs, assessing how many youth are eligible to participate, and evaluating what proportion of those youth are enrolled in high-quality programs (see the full report for a discussion of several approaches to measuring program quality). Ideally, it also involves either directly measuring developmental assets or integrating data with outside systems to evaluate how afterschool programs are influencing a broader set of outcomes related to academic achievement, employment or public safety. Mapping these results can also highlight areas of opportunity for further afterschool systems development.

Promote Accountability, Demonstrate Return on Investment, and Allocate Scarce Resources

Related to their value in gauging afterschool system- and program-level reach and impact, MI systems enable city leaders and private funders to hold programs accountable for achieving desired results and analyze at a policy level where their investment of afterschool dollars is most needed and is likely to bring the largest return. As Priscilla Little, initiative manager at The Wallace Foundation, has said, “Given the new economic climate in which cities and states are operating, out-of-school time is an increasingly data-driven enterprise with results-based decision making. Evaluations are non-negotiable. You have to have that data to support your claims.”

On the flip side, MI system data can help local leaders make the case for sustaining and expanding high-quality afterschool programs. “Accountability,” in this sense, is not only a bureaucratic necessity – it provides a framework through which afterschool providers and their supporters in local government can make a powerful argument for increased investment in afterschool systems.

Empower Afterschool Providers and Reduce Paperwork

Afterschool data collected in MI systems allow city and non-city program providers to make better decisions at the program level and work more effectively and efficiently by:

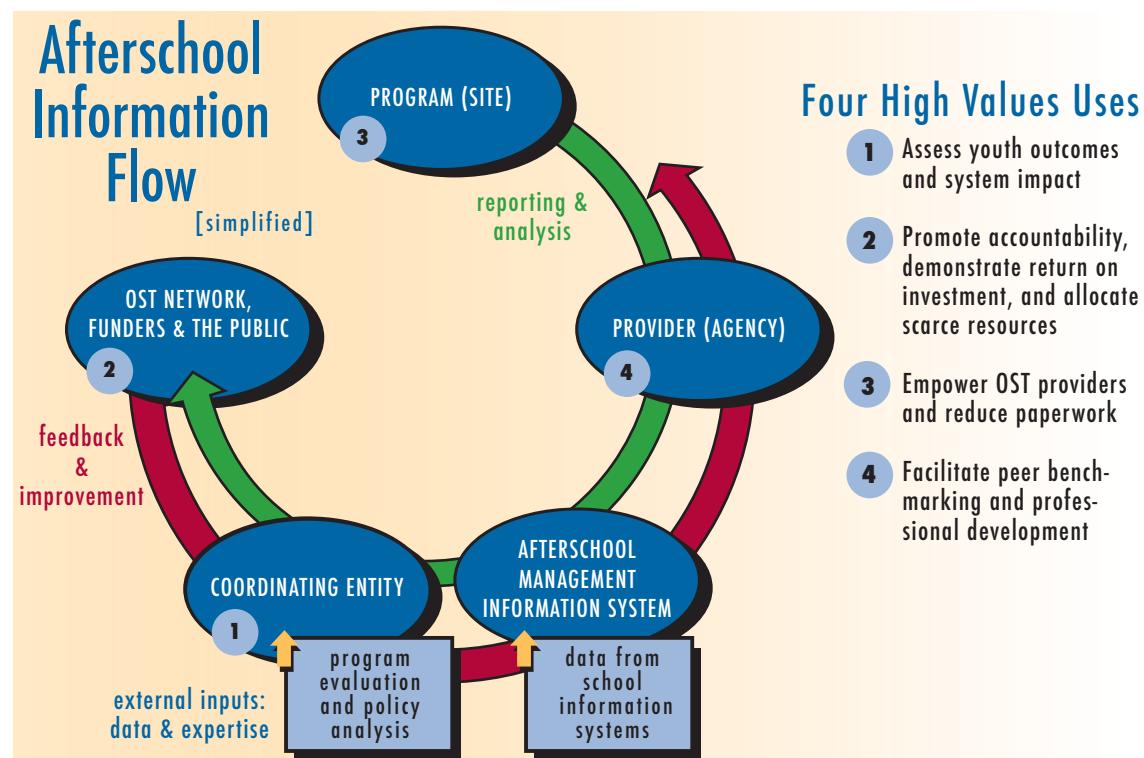
- **Informing agencies and managers**, providing them with continuous feedback on program results. This feedback can help transform engagement between agencies and programs, and between programs and parents, from a yearly “report card” to an ongoing, substantive conversation about improving results.
- **Empowering program sites and instructors** with (near) real-time information on student outcomes such as attendance, behavior and academic performance that allows sites to tailor their instruction more closely to the needs of the youth they serve.
- **Reducing paperwork.** Automating the creation of routine reports and rosters can be the “killer app” that wins over skeptical providers, and reducing or eliminating

the demands on individual sites to gather student academic data can be incredibly important for taking afterschool programs to scale.

Facilitate Peer Benchmarking and Professional Development

By delivering information to programs on their results relative to similar programs, citywide afterschool systems can facilitate peer benchmarking and help programs understand how their work aligns with larger community goals of college and career readiness. They can also use data to identify high-performers and offer targeted professional development to spread the adoption of best practices throughout the community.

These practices represent a shift from the one-way flow of information in many cities, in which providers send information upward through mandatory reports to funders with competing requirements and experience little feedback in the form of system-wide data. The diagram below illustrates how an MIS can support data-driven decision making as information flows from individual programs to city decision-makers and back again. As the information collected in an MIS travels from a program to its funders – including the elected officials who allocate local revenues to city, school-based or nonprofit programs – it is used to evaluate youth outcomes and system impact, demonstrate return on investment and allocate scarce afterschool resources, and sustain and expand support for high-quality afterschool programs. In a high functioning afterschool network, a system’s coordinating entity then “closes the loop” by sending the results of these analyses back down to individual providers and sites, using them to facilitate peer benchmarking and empower afterschool providers with more complete information on the youth they serve.



MIS READINESS CHECKLIST

A management information system is not, primarily, a technology project. It is a process of aligning the goals and resources of a great number of afterschool stakeholders, where technology plays an important supportive role. Successful cities have generally undertaken each of the following tasks, described in greater detail in the full report:

Gather the Right Partners

Cities often get started by convening key stakeholders to forge a common vision about how to expand afterschool programming in a way that aligns with other local objectives. This group can also think about missing stakeholders, broadening the initial group to ensure that the right people are at the table, including parents, providers, funders, elected officials, and others who can maintain this vision for afterschool investment, establish common standards, negotiate information sharing relationships, and oversee the implementation of the work. These partners typically also designate a coordinating entity that is charged with executing the strategy and managing day-to-day operations. While many different approaches to governance, technology, and use of information can be successful, no strategy is likely to meet expectations without a deliberate and inclusive process for designing, selecting and implementing the MI system.

Clarify Information Needs

City leaders will want to ensure that the partners involved in this process have a clearly articulated vision for how better data would improve what they are able to do for young people in the community. Could new data help policymakers improve decisions about services for youth? Does the city lack needed information related to the direct management or funding of programs? Do teachers, case managers or program staff want to be able to intervene early when there are warning signs that youth are in distress? Do programs in the community need better data on the reach and impact of their services to effectively compete for funding? Identifying what questions need to be answered, for whom, and to what end will ensure that the development of an MI system will lead to better policies, programs and services for youth and their families.

Conduct a Self-Inventory

City leaders may first ask what information systems and reporting relationships already exist. It is increasingly rare that any city is in a position to create a management information system from scratch. Many afterschool programs already use one or more reporting systems and are committed to certain technologies. Large and small nonprofits, community-based organizations and faith-based providers may have very different constraints and concerns even within the same city, and these are important inputs into the decision-making process. In fact, many citywide systems develop through a process of evolution rather than revolution.

Develop Shared Measures and Outcomes

The information afterschool programs collect to manage their programs and meet reporting requirements is often just as diverse as their operational constraints and information systems. By creating a “data dictionary,” establishing common benchmarks, and harmonizing reporting requirements, city leaders create more efficient afterschool systems that are better aligned with citywide strategies for youth development.

Describe the High-Level Business Requirements

City leaders rarely complain that their specification for a major technology purchase was too detailed. It is not uncommon, however, for cities to realize late into the procurement process that they require user roles, case management functionality, or grant management features that they had not initially envisioned or for which they had not contracted. A description of how each of the participants in a city’s afterschool network – administrators, agencies, providers and evaluators – will need to use the MIS provides city leaders with both the criteria for selecting a vendor and a system specification to guide that company’s work.

Design the Network and Establish Information Sharing Agreements

An MIS is built from several key elements that may be located within different organizations from city to city, depending on the afterschool partnership and the resources of each member. Decisions about where to host, link and aggregate data, what role schools or external consultants play in evaluation, and who administers the software can lead cities to design very different “network architectures.” These decisions also raise legal and privacy concerns, which must be negotiated in advance and spelled out clearly in information sharing agreements.

Pilot the System

To troubleshoot the inevitable glitches, build trust, and win advocates, city coordinating entities often opt to pilot MI systems with a limited number of their most enthusiastic providers.

Expand and Regularize

Many of the challenges uncovered during the pilot stage, such as an ongoing need for training, inconsistent definition of basic terms like “attendance,” and varying levels of data quality among providers, lead cities to explore different strategies for expanding their network and creating mechanisms for continuous improvement.

Cities interviewed by NLC have been able to move through these steps at different speeds, but sourcing and implementing a management information system takes time and requires a deep level of engagement and consultation with partners in city government, schools and throughout the community. Often, the process of defining business requirements and identifying the best way to meet them is an iterative one. Afterschool providers will express their specific needs and limitations around technology, training, and information for generating grant requests and

reports. School districts and other informational partners may suggest a path for addressing privacy concerns or developing evaluation plans. Vendors, once they have a fairly clear sense of a network's needs, can provide invaluable consultation around what strategies have worked in other cities. This is a "rolling process of discovery," as one major vendor described it, and city leaders should not expect to single-handedly draft an RFP and issue a contract. Most cities should, however, consult with multiple vendors about their needs.

NLC SYSTEMS-BUILDING RESOURCES

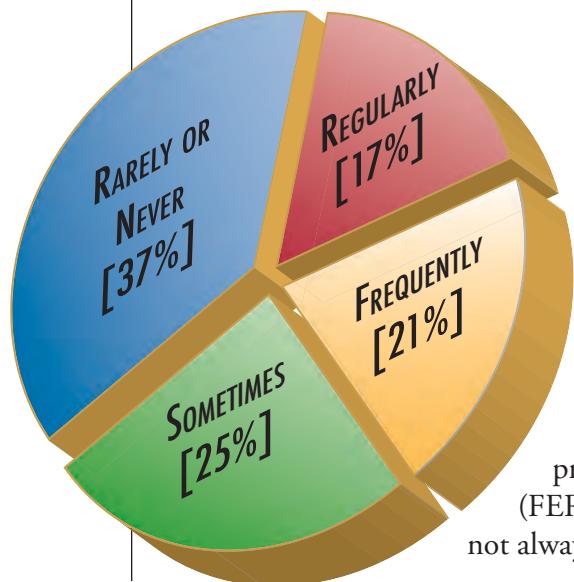
Building afterschool MI systems may be as much art as science, but it is an increasingly well-established art for which many resources have already been developed by peers and national experts. The full report and its accompanying online resource library include a number of tools and templates for city leaders to adapt to their own local needs:

- The *MIS Functionality Checklist* is a full-page worksheet for city leaders to use when identifying the critical business processes to be supported by their MIS.
- This checklist is a starting point for cities to use when adapting NLC's *Afterschool MIS Request for Qualifications* to solicit price and feature proposals from commercial vendors.
- Peer examples of *data dictionaries*, *data sharing agreements*, and *program evaluations* are all available online at www.nlc.org/afterschoolmis.

The full report features three different, but equally successful, approaches to MI system building in Nashville, Tenn.; Denver, Colo.; and Grand Rapids, Mich.

DATA STEWARDSHIP: HOW TO PROTECT AND SHARE INFORMATION

Chart 3. Among the cities surveyed by NLC in 2011, two-thirds of city coordinating entities share information with public schools.



Afterschool management information systems process and store a tremendous amount of information on youth participants in order to improve policy, programs, and direct service. To implement and maintain such a system, however, those leading an MIS initiative must assure students, parents, and each of the project partners that they are responsible stewards of this sensitive information. In practice, this means providing guarantees that the data in the system are "fit for purpose" and that every reasonable precaution has been taken to prevent their misuse.

The specific permissions and prohibitions governing the collection and use of data by an MI system are defined by an overlapping web of federal and state laws, the most prominent of which in the context of afterschool programs is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Untangling the specific application of these laws is not always straightforward.

However, city leaders undertaking this effort should be encouraged by the success of their peers: 67 percent of the cities surveyed by NLC in 2011 have established a framework for sharing information among youth service organizations and schools. Local officials may also be encouraged by recent FERPA rules issued by the U.S. Department of Education, which respond to some of the most common objections to expanding data sharing relationships with local education agencies. Cities that can demonstrate a commitment to the principles of fair information practices, that are familiar with how these practices have been embedded in federal law, and that are committed to building trust with school and other information partners can expect to be successful in negotiating access to the data necessary to support their work.

Privacy

There are three primary strategies that cities use to protect students' privacy as they negotiate with schools to receive access to student academic data for the purposes of evaluating and improving afterschool programs:

1. Partnering with schools to conduct afterschool evaluations, relying on schools' access to individually identified student data to create aggregate reports that can be shared more broadly with city decision-makers and the public.
2. Designating the afterschool coordinating entity or other key partner as an "agent" of the schools, using one of the exceptions authorized by FERPA.
3. Requesting prior written permission from each student's parent or guardian to share academic information with providers.

The first two strategies – school-based evaluation and designation as a FERPA-defined "agent" of the schools – are most useful for evaluating programs and overall youth outcomes. These strategies may, for example, allow for a comparison of youth participating in afterschool programs to the general student population and cohorts of non-participating youth. On the other hand, if the afterschool partnership would like to allow providers access to individual student data for purposes of case management on a day-to-day basis, prior written consent from each student's parent or guardian is required. These three strategies are not mutually exclusive, and each is described in more detail in the full report.

Security

Security is the enforcement of a privacy agreement. The assurances made to students, parents, and data partners that their confidentiality will be protected are only as credible as the ability of the coordinating entity to enforce them, and the trust between local partners can be permanently broken by negligence, malfeasance or the unauthorized re-disclosure of private information. MI systems present a new set of risks in this regard, but also provide a set of tools for managing these risks. City leaders often provide the following safeguards:

- Many **create a security policy and implement internal controls**, including proactive

education of staff, encrypting private data on disk and in transit, and developing a protocol to handle any potential breach.

- Cities using private contractors **require security assurances from all MIS vendors**, beginning with an evaluation of how they handle role-based access to sensitive information. Vendors should audit their own security arrangements and provide a disaster recovery policy that outlines their procedures with regard to data breaches, application failures, and natural disasters.
- In addition, many schools and other organizations that agree to provide information to a citywide afterschool system may request that one or both of the coordinating entity and its MIS vendor undergo a **security audit**, or at least retain the right to require one at a future date.

In a final analysis, the growth of student data systems – and out-of-school time MI systems among them – is likely to protect student privacy more than endanger it. A tremendous amount of protected student information changes hands now, passed directly between teachers, principals and program staff informally, and stored in a variety of electronic and physical settings without much thought to security. Teachers and afterschool program managers have every reason to share information on the youth they both serve. Data security is a major concern to schools, however, as many districts tighten their control over student information and replace these “ad hoc” teacher-provider relationships with formal agreements that meet the standard of federal and state privacy laws.

SELECTING A COMMERCIAL MIS

While a few notable citywide afterschool systems are supported by self-developed software, the majority of afterschool management information systems are built by a handful of commercial vendors. Selecting a vendor is among the most important decisions a city will make in developing its afterschool MIS, as this firm serves not only as a technology provider but also as a consultant to the many other tasks associated with creating a citywide system. The final section of this report offers guidance for selecting a commercial MIS and comparing the various features of different vendors’ products. A supplemental online cost calculator provides a range of estimated prices communities may expect to pay for building and maintaining an MIS.

Based on responses to a request for information (RFI), the full report compares six – including all of the most prominent – MIS vendors:

- Cityspan Technologies, Inc.
- Comet Informatics
- Community TechKnowledge
- nFocus Solutions
- Social Solutions
- ThomasKelly Software

The report briefly describes two other vendors of commercial MI systems in use by cities surveyed by NLC: Cayen Systems and CiviCore.

Offering a high-level starting point for cities to compare commercial products, NLC compiled information on each system's capacities related to commonly requested features, including:

- Enrollment, attendance and participation
- Case management
- Agency, site and staff management
- Survey and assessment instruments
- Reporting
- Integration with other data systems
- Training and support
- Grant and contract management
- Financial
- Additional functionality

In addition, the six companies that responded to NLC's January 2012 request for information each provided cost estimates for a generalized afterschool system, including "fixed" setup costs, training, customization, and recurring licensing costs. NLC used these estimates to provide an interactive cost calculator online. While these cost estimates are in no way binding on the companies that participated, they offer cities a reasonably good idea of the range of prices they might expect to pay for a citywide MI system, given certain parameters.

NLC has made every effort to ensure this information is accurate as of early 2012; however, these products are complex and fast-developing. NLC strongly encourages city leaders to conduct an RFP process whenever feasible and certainly contact vendors directly to discuss the city's specific needs, better understand the nuances of each MI system's features and implementation, and get a more accurate assessment of the likely cost. NLC does not endorse a specific software application; rather, the "best fit" for a city or youth-serving agency depends on its specific business case, its budget, and the local expertise available to it.

Cities at the leading edge of integrating and managing data on youth have demonstrated that a well-planned MIS can significantly improve the capacity of an afterschool system to reach more students with better programs and services, and can do so in a way that respects privacy rights and keeps information secure. This report is a guide for cities seeking to travel this path to a more integrated and informed afterschool system that is constantly striving to help young people reach their full potential.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To download the full report, visit www.nlc.org/afterschoolmis. For more information, please contact Chris Kingsley, Senior Associate for Data Initiatives at NLC's Institute for Youth, Education and Families, at (202) 626-3160 or kingsley@nlc.org.



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